

Sellassie I University (now The National University) for use of facilities during my tenure there from 1964–1975, the Department of Wildlife Ecology of the University of Wisconsin (Madison) where I prepared this paper, and L. L. Urban, K. L. Urban, T. G. Jefford and I. L. Gibson for their assistance in the study.

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A new subspecies of the Long-legged Warbler, *Trichocichla rufa* Reichenow, from Vanua Levu, Fiji

by F. C. Kinsky

Received 5th May, 1975

The species *Trichocichla rufa* was described by Reichenow (1890) from three specimens bought in 1890 by the Museum of Natural History, Berlin, from "Linnaea" Naturalists, Berlin. The Holotype is held in the collection of the Museum of Natural History, Berlin, No. 28360 and the locality on its label confirms its published origin as being the Island of Viti Levu. No collecting date, sex, or collector's name are noted on the label. The two Paratypes were given in exchange to the American Museum of Natural History, New York, and to the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, respectively (G. Mauersberger, *in litt.*).

The American Museum of Natural History now holds two specimens of *Trichocichla rufa* in its collections. No. 265220 (one of the above mentioned Paratypes) is a somewhat damaged specimen and as in the Holotype no collecting date, sex, or collector's name are mentioned on the label. Only the locality, Viti Levu, Fiji, is given for this specimen. The second specimen, in excellent condition, is No. 589049, a male, collected 14 November 1894, Suva (Viti Levu), Fiji, by C. M. Woodford (J. Bull, *in litt.*).

Mayr (1945) gives the following description of *Trichocichla rufa*: "Dark rufous brown above with a conspicuous white, posteriorly buff eye-stripe. Middle of throat and breast white; sides and abdomen rufous brown. Iris and bill brown". He also points out that the species is known from Viti Levu only, has not been found during the past 50 years and is now possibly extinct. There are no further published records of this species known to me.

Colour photographs of the Holotype and of the American Museum of Natural History specimen No. 589049 were kindly supplied to me for comparative purposes by Dr. G. Mauersberger and Mr. J. Bull, respectively. The white, posteriorly buff, superciliary stripe is clearly visible on these photographs (Pl. 1a), as well as the white "middle of throat", as described by Mayr (Pl. 2a). However, the amount of white on the breast looks different in the two specimens. The breast of the Holotype seems to be uniformly light rufous brown, while in the AMNH 589049 specimen it is only the upper breast which is pale although strongly blotched with rufous brown (Pl. 2a).

At the present time a comprehensive survey of the avifauna of the Fiji archipelago is being undertaken jointly by the National Museum of New

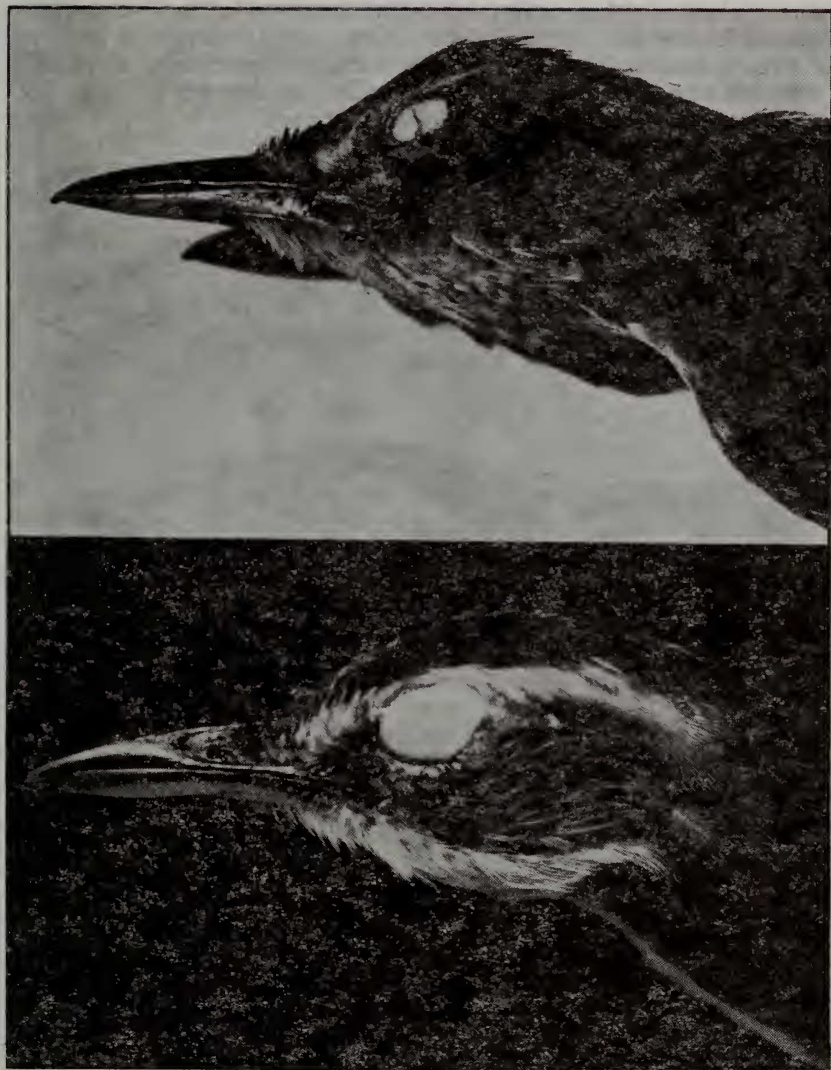


Plate 1. *Trichocichla rufa*, adult males to show contrasting superciliary stripe and throat colour:

- a. *T. rufa rufa* AMNH 589049;
- b. *T. rufa cluniei* subsp. nov. Holotype.

(a. is photo by AMNH and b. by Mr. T. Ulyatt, National Museum N.Z.).

Zealand, Wellington, and the Fiji Museum, Suva. Taveuni Island, western Viti Levu and Vatulele Island were visited during 1972 and 1973, and the central parts of the Island of Vanua Levu were surveyed during June and early July, 1974. On 10 June 1974, a Long-legged Warbler was collected in a mistnet in thick rain forest on the southern slopes of the Delanacau Mountain Range in west-central Vanua Levu. The bird was strikingly

different in plumage colour to published descriptions of the species *Trichocichla rufa* Reichenow. After comparison with colour photographs of two of the three specimens listed above I now consider that the new specimen is conspecific with *Trichocichla rufa*, but must be considered as a distinct subspecies on both geographical and plumage grounds.

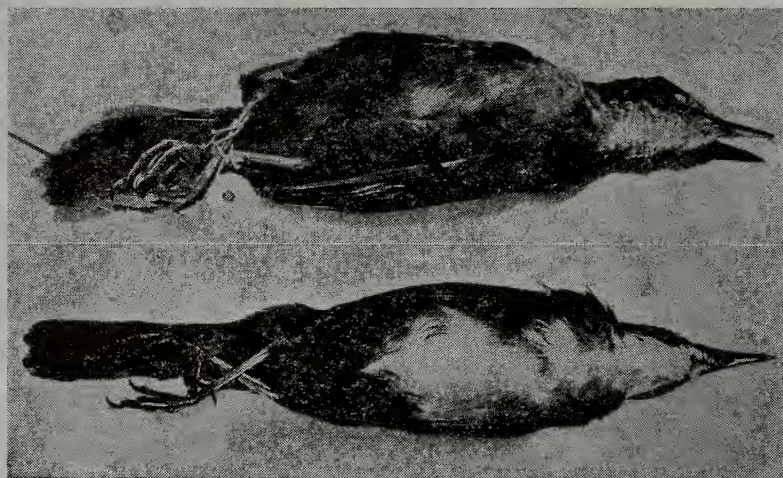


Plate 2. *Trichocichla rufa*, adult males, to show contrasting amounts of white on underparts;

a. *T. rufa rufa* AMNH 589049;

b. *T. rufa cluniei* subsp. nov. Holotype.

(a. is photo by AMNH and b. by Mr. T. Ulyatt, National Museum N.Z.).

Measurements of three specimens of *Trichocichla rufa*

Specimen:	Date:	Locality:	Sex	Bill	Tarsus	Toe	Wing	Tail
Holotype								
Berlin 28360	?	Viti Levu	?	17.5	30.5	26.0	81.0	82.5
Paratype								
AMNH 265220	?	Viti Levu Fiji	?	15.0	32.0	24.0	76.0	71.5*
AMNH 589049	14.II.1894	Suva Fiji	♂	16.0	31.0	23.5	76.5	72.5

*Tail badly worn

Trichocichla rufa cluniei subsp. nov.

Diagnosis: Adult male, upper parts including head, nape, back, rump and upper tail coverts uniformly dark rufous brown. Long, graduated tail dark rufous brown, faintly but densely barred with darker brown. Upper wing coverts, primaries and secondaries dark rufous brown with lighter rufous edges to outer veins of proximal secondaries. Broad white superciliary stripe extending from base of bill to nape, including upper eyelid (Pl. 1b). Entire chin, throat and centre of breast and abdomen white (Pl. 2b). Sides of breast and abdomen including flanks, vent and under tail coverts bright rufous brown. Culmen dark slate grey, lower mandible a contrasting light grey horn. Iris dark hazel, tarsi and toes light pinkish buff.

Differs from the nominate subspecies *T. rufa rufa* by the entirely white superciliary stripe and throat, and the white continuing in an unbroken wide stripe from the throat to the lower abdomen.

Female unknown.

Distribution: Dense rain forest of central Vanua Levu, Fiji.

Type: Adult ♂ with enlarged testes, Nabauloa Creek area, southern slopes of Delancau Mountain Range (c. 300m. above sea level), Vanua Levu, Fiji, 10 June 1974, collected by F. C. Kinsky; National Museum of New Zealand 18520.

Measurements of type: Culmen 17.4 mm, Tarsus 30.5 mm, Toe incl. claw 24.5 mm, Wing 76.5 mm, Tail 73 mm, Total length 180 mm, Weight 35g.

Remarks: Only one specimen was collected in an area of undisturbed rain forest with dense and tangled undergrowth and a thick knee-high ground cover of ferns. The mistnet (3 × 12 m) was set at ground level. A second specimen was seen in an area of similar habitat approximately one-and-a-half to two miles distant. No calls were heard. The species has not previously been reported from Vanua Levu.

Despite Mayr's comments (1933: 4) I have used the genus *Trichocichla* Reichenow for this species. However, this is done without prejudice as I realise that the status of *Trichocichla* is uncertain and its relationship to the apparently closely similar genera *Ortygocichla* (New Britain), *Cichlornis* (New Hebrides), *Megalurulus* (New Caledonia) and possibly *Eremiornis* (Australia), of the subfamily Sylviinae, are unknown.

Name: This new subspecies is named after Mr. Fergus Clunie, Assistant Director, Fiji Museum, Suva, in recognition of his valuable assistance throughout the continuing joint National Museum of New Zealand—Fiji Museum project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Dr. G. Mauersberger, Natural History Museum, Berlin, and Mr. J. Bull, American Museum of Natural History, New York, for all the help they have given me by supplying colour photographs, measurements and information concerning the specimens of *Trichocichla rufa* in their respective museum collections. My thanks are also due to Dr. E. Mayr, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, for his helpful comments and encouragement.

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Geographic variation and other notes on *Basileuterus leucoblepharus* (Parulidae)

by Storrs L. Olson

Received 27th May, 1975

The White-browed Warbler, *Basileuterus leucoblepharus* (Vieillot) 1817, occurs in southeastern Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and northern and central Argentina. Vieillot based his name on "El Contramaestre" of Azara and the type locality of the species has been accepted as "Paraguay". At one time Hellmayr